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solar spectrum is the B group of absorption lines, near the red end of the spectrum. In addition to the complex head of the group there are thirteen or fourteen double lines whose intensities decrease as the distance of the doublets from the head increases. These lines owe their origin to oxygen absorption; but the question has been, is the absorption due to oxygen in the solar atmosphere or in the Earth's atmosphere. If the latter, then the lines should not be so prominent if observed at a station of great altitude. M. JANSSEN states that at the station, Chamonix, altitude 1050 metres, the thirteenth doublet is seen with great difficulty; at Grands-Mulets (3050 metres) only eleven or twelve doublets can be seen; while at the summit of Mont Blanc only eight can be seen with certainty. The conclusion to be drawn from these observations is that the B group of absorption lines would not be visible to an observer at the upper limit of our atmosphere, and therefore owes its origin to the oxygen in our own atmosphere.

M. JANSSEN is also of the opinion that the prominent groups A and α are of terrestrial origin, and would disappear at the upper limit of our atmosphere.

There is a wide field of useful work before the Mont Blanc observers, and astronomy is again indebted to the generosity of M. BISCHOFFSHEIM, who is defraying a large part of the expense of construction and equipment. We trust that the difficulties of life on the summit may not impose very narrow limits upon the investigations to be undertaken. W. W. C.

THE SPECTRUM OF *ALCYONE* (η *TAURI*).

The spectrum of *Alcyone* is always classed as SECCHI'S type I, or *A*, as in the DRAPER Catalogue; that is, a spectrum containing dark (and usually rather broad) hydrogen lines. I have observed this star visually, and found the Hα hydrogen line to be bright. It is not very intense, but in good seeing is easily visible with the 36-inch telescope. There is a narrow dark line in contact with it on the side of smaller wave-length, and possibly a still finer one on the side of greater wave-length. I do not think this line can be seen with a 12-inch telescope.

A photograph of the portion of the spectrum between Hβ and K shows Hβ, Hγ, Hδ and H to be dark, as was expected, and a few additional fine dark lines. W. W. C.

September 7, 1893.